



**AUGUST MEETING:** The next regular meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday evening, 11th inst., at eight o'clock, in the rooms of the Engineers' Club, ninth floor of Mechanics Institute Building, 57 Post St., San Francisco.

This occasion will be marked by a round table discussion and exchange of experiences during the vacation season just terminating for most of us. The members scattered far afield and some of us succeeded in avoiding newspapers from start to finish. Several went to Alaska; others to the High Sierra; one at least to the Grand Canyon; and many others had experiences at other places with our feathered friends. Each of these will have something of interest to impart and they are one and all cordially urged to take part in making this the best reunion in the history of the Association.

While business will be relegated to the background at this meeting, it is necessary to bear in mind the unsettled question of future place of meeting. The Board of Directors not only solicits suggestions, but it also requires the assistance of any members who may be in a position to aid in securing a meeting hall of appropriate character, favorably located, and obtainable on reasonable terms.

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**AUGUST FIELD TRIP** will be taken on Sunday, August 14th, to Fairfax and the Cascades, Marin County. Purchase round trip tickets to Fairfax, 54c. Take Sausalito Ferry leaving 8:45 a.m. Bring lunch and canteens. Leader, Mr. Kibbe.

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### NOTES ON A TRIP TO ALASKA

Our steamer, the Northwestern, left Seattle July seventh, and for four days we traversed the inland passage and threaded our way past Vancouver Island and along the Canadian shore to Skaguay. Every mile of this passage is beautiful, with high mountains rising from the water on either side of the channel. These waters are smooth and reflect all the colors of a mountain lake. During the long twilight, the black mountains mirrored in their depths furnish a fascinating panorama, one which the traveler will never forget.

The water birds evidently do not look for beauty in selecting their habitat, for we saw few on this waterway. The glaucous-winged gulls were with us every day. We occasionally saw northern phalaropes, shearwaters, white-winged and surf scoters, cormorants, murres and tufted puffins. Along the shore, bald eagles and fish crows perched in the fir trees.

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When we drove out from Juneau to the Mendenhall glacier, we found our first song birds. By the roadside we heard the Gambel and golden-crowned sparrows, chickadees and juncos singing. A little mountain stream rushed into the white waters of the glacier outlet, and here we found the water ouzel flying up and down the stream, giving the same sharp notes as his California relatives use.

From Skaguay we came back and passed through the Icy Straits and Glacier Bay on our westward way to Seward, where we were two hours behind San Francisco time. In these cold waters we saw hundreds of icebergs and every berg was the perching site for as many birds as could find a foothold upon it. As soon as we were in the open waters, six black-footed albatrosses appeared in the wake of the steamer and followed us for two days. They met us in the same place on our return trip.

From Cordova we rode along the famous Iron Trail sixty miles to see the Miles and Childs glaciers, two of the largest in Alaska. This road passes over a flat country which is almost covered by the flood water from the glaciers and the Copper River. From the train we spied many ducks and a few marsh birds. We were able to identify sandpipers, yellowlegs and Wilson snipe. In the trees we again saw many bald eagles.

In Prince William Sound we had more birds than we wanted to see. Here there are many salmon and herring canneries and salteries, and the herring, glaucous-winged and short-billed gulls flock there by the thousands to feed upon the offal from these plants. It is a curious sight to see the trees on the small islands in the harbors white with the gulls that use them for resting places when they desist occasionally from their greedy quest for food.

At Valdez, which is within five degrees of the Arctic Circle, we found many Arctic terns. These are beautiful birds which have a characteristic fluttering flight which readily distinguishes them among the hundreds of birds in the bay. In this harbor we heard the golden-crowned sparrow singing his twilight song at 11:15 in the evening.

The violet-green and cliff swallows we saw everywhere, along the banks of the channel, over the marshes, and in the villages. They were the common birds of the Alaskan shores. The Steller jay, song sparrow, fox sparrow, robin, hermit thrush and three-toed woodpecker were seen in the woods at many of the small ports where our steamer called. Other than the birds mentioned above, there were numbers of water birds which we were unable to identify.

EVA F. GRIFFIN.



## A TIMELY MESSAGE

In an address before the Fresno Agricultural Society, on March 8th, Mr. J. G. Tyler, Field Manager of the California Peach and Fig Growers, made the following comments upon the situation in the San Joaquin Valley, in the respect of birds and bird values:

"The Sunday tourists in automobiles, carrying shot-guns and rifles, kill the farmers' best friends along every roadside. Almost as soon as they are able to leave their cradles, boys are given air-guns and are permitted to

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practice on the songster in the tree-tops. When this thoughtless slaughter began, you could ride along the highway and find the dead hawks by nearly every telephone post. Birds which never did any harm, but which took their daily toll of squirrels, gophers, mice, cut-worms, alfalfa caterpillars and coddling moths, lay dead in numbers wherever the Sunday tourist spent his ammunition. Birds which lost some of their fear of man at nesting time, were killed without mercy, simply, it would seem, because of insatiable lust to shed blood. And the farmers themselves, generally not realizing the irreparable damage being done, have been guilty of some of these killings. The purchase of sprays and insecticides for all crops and fruits began to grow and they are brought in, carload after carload, by the growers."

It might well be wished that this testimony from a representative of fruit-growers should be brought to the knowledge of every farmer and grower in the country. Coming from an acknowledged bird-lover, such statements receive scant consideration. The balance of nature is a sealed mystery to the ordinary citizen and a negligible myth to the great bulk of our alien and foreign-born population. When special interests conflict with ornithological facts, then so much the worse for the facts, as witness the turmoil over the alleged damage to rice fields by wild fowl and likewise the persistent attacks upon the game laws during every session of the Legislature; as witness also the senseless and outrageous Alaskan bounty on bald eagles. The writer is reminded, in this connection, of a story told at the Cooper Club, some years back, by Prof. Snyder of Stanford University. It appeared that a new neighbor had moved into the house adjacent to his, accompanied by two prosperous cats, and followed by what might be termed the natural reduction in the bird population of gardens in the vicinity. When comment was made upon this fact, some months later, the recent acquisition expressed his conviction that the cats were only remotely responsible for the change. "I regret," said he, "that our cats may have killed a few birds when we first came here—birds that nested low in the bushes or on the ground, but fortunately, the birds soon learned to build their nests higher up, out of harm's way."

The psychology of air-gun control is a fearful and a wonderful thing. It is unlawful to discharge one of these minor engines of destruction within the limits of the city of Berkeley or of the city and county of San Francisco, (except within a shooting gallery), or on any street or public place within the limits of the cities of Alameda or Oakland, yet they are on sale and openly exhibited in almost every toy shop or sporting goods store in the districts described. They are purchased and freely supplied by parents to children of tender years and are in constant use on all hands, although the most casual observer will note that a child soon wearies of a stationary or inanimate target. If we ignore the law and admit the desirability of teaching the proper use of guns, we are not thereby committed to the propriety of killing or maiming any birds or other animals that may venture within range, but this work goes merrily on.

The outstanding duty of all bird lovers and conservationists lies in eternal vigilance and persistent efforts to educate the rising generation, with recourse to the law for the punishment of persistent violators or others who prove unamenable to persuasion.

A. S. KIBBE.

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**JULY FIELD TRIP** was taken on Sunday the 17th to Big Lagoon, with a stopover at Muir Woods for lunch. Thanks to the dance hall outside the reservation only a few hikers were in the woods and those of the party who had never been introduced to the wonders of Muir Woods were well repaid for the extra walk. Except for the coast jays all the birds must have been in the tops of the tallest trees. The usual route was followed, the steps avoided, and after leaving Muir Woods the creek was closely followed down to the ocean. The day was cloudy, with only occasional glimpses of blue sky. Birds were rather shy and Tamalpais had its head in the clouds most of the time. But it was a fine day for a hike! California towhees were plentiful all along the way and brown pelicans were the most numerous birds on the ocean.

Birds seen crossing the bay were murre, California, Heermann and western gulls; cormorants, surf scoters, great blue heron and redbacked sandpipers. To these we added brown pelicans at the ocean. Land birds seen were California quail, mourning dove, turkey vulture, sparrow hawk; Allen hummingbird; black phoebe and western flycatcher; coast and California jays; western crow, Brewer blackbird; California purple finch and house finch, willow and greenback goldfinches, pine siskin, Nuttall sparrow, Marin song sparrow; San Francisco and California towhees and one black-headed grosbeak; cliff, barn and violet-green swallows; pileolated warblers, western house wren, chickadees and bushtits, wrentits and russetbacked thrushes. Thirty-nine species in all.

Owing to the vacation season only seven people made the trip. It is a fine one and should be repeated soon. It may be twelve miles on the official Audubon map, but it's not that on foot! Guests were Miss Marion Deven-dorf, Miss Edith Zweybruck, Miss Edith D. Maxwell. Members present were Mrs. Edward Hohfeld, Mrs. Kelly, Miss Pierce and Mr. Thomas.

C. R. THOMAS.

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